[8th March 1947

Plans to check soil erosion.

* 86 *Q.*—Sri R. SURYANARAYANA RAO: Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state what plans the Government have to check soil erosion in the Province and whether any specific schemes have been sanctioned for the purpose?

The Hon. Sri B. VENKATARATNAM :—" The first part of the question is a very wide one which cannot be answered fully in a question as there are a number of schemes and suggestions on the technical and practical side of the issue. Anyhow schemes now undertaken are given below :—

(1) The District staff of the Agricultural Department in all districts do propaganda on the following items of soil conservation work :—

(i) Contour bunding and contour ploughing and gully plugging;
(ii) Strip cropping;
(iii) Tree planting, hedge planting, planting grasses, etc.;
(iv) Construction of check dams;
(v) Terracing of sloping lands;
(vi) Cultivation of cover crops.

(2) With a view to popularizing the bunding of lands for greater absorption of rain water and preventing soil erosion, the Government sanctioned in 1944 a scheme of demonstration with wooden bund-formers in six taluks in Bellary district. This scheme has been continued in a larger area in 1946. Three thousand five hundred and ninety-four acres have been bunded in that year.

(3) Experiments on erosion are being conducted in run off plots at Hagari, Bellary district and Nanjanad on the Nilgiris.

(4) The following two schemes have been included in the five-year plan of Past-war Reconstruction :—

(i) *Formation of soil conservation circles.*—With a view to setting up the necessary organization by the Forest department to deal with the special protection and land management of important catchment areas, the Government have accorded sanction in December 1945 for the formation of a Soil Conservation Division to cover the Nilgiris district and the adjoining Attapadi Valley of Malabar and Coimbatore districts. The Division was formed in January 1946. To enlist the co-operation of the public in pushing through the scheme it was proposed to constitute an advisory body called the Soil Conservation Board consisting of both officials and non-officials. But in view of the present financial position of the Province it has been suggested that this scheme may be dropped. The question of dropping or reviving the scheme will be considered at the next meeting of the Development Board.

8th March 1947]

(ii) *Carrying out contour bunds and contour trenches.*—To conserve rain water and to prevent soil erosion it is proposed to carry out contour bunds and contour trenches over a lakh of acres every year in the Vizagapatam district and in one of the Ceded Districts and demonstrate the advantages of dry farming methods. Proposals have now been received for carrying out experimental contour bunding work over an area of 5,000 acres near Guntakal and 2,500 acres near Hagari in Bellary district. To begin with, the question of undertaking legislation on the lines of the Bombay Land Improvement Scheme Act, 1942, to enable contour bunding work being undertaken is under consideration of the Government.

(5) A Dry Farming Research Scheme financed partly by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research and partly by the Provincial Government has been in progress at Hagari in the Bellary district from 1934 onwards. The object of the scheme is to demonstrate the advantages of the improved dry farming practices, bunding and strip cropping.

(6) The Government have had a comprehensive text-book on Soil Erosion compiled for the benefit of departmental officers, students at the Agricultural, Forest, etc., colleges, and others. The book is in the press and is expected to be published shortly."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know, Sir, how long since this scheme for preventing soil erosion near Guntakal has been pending with the Government and when any practical work will be begun?"

THE HON. SRI B. VENKATARATNAM :—" I want notice, Sir."

Formation of food committees.

* 87 *Q.*—ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Motor Transport and Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether district, taluk and village food committees have been formed in all the districts of the Province ;

(*b*) if not, when are they expected to be formed ;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that even in some of the districts where food committees have been formed members of the legislature, representing those districts and residing in villages, where such committees have been formed, have neither been consulted nor invited to attend the meetings of such committees ; and

(*d*) if so, what steps Government have taken or propose to take to make the district authorities act in accordance with the instructions of the Government in this respect?